

REMARKS

The present amendment is being submitted prior to the issuance of a first Office Action in the current continuation application.

It is respectfully submitted that the claims presently on file differ essentially and in an unobvious, highly advantageous manner from the methods disclosed in the references previously cited.

Turning first to the Doyle reference (EP 0099264), as has previously been pointed out Doyle uses a dry powder toner which is blown on. Thus, in the process of Doyle it is not possible to carry out a step of fixing liquid toner particles, as in the presently claimed invention. Furthermore, even if Doyle acknowledges the possibility of using fluid particles in their photomechanical process, there is no mention by Doyle of fixing and erasing, nor do such steps come into consideration.

Furthermore, in the presently claimed invention the thickness of the layer of liquid toner particles can be controlled by the electrostatic application of the liquid toner particles to the printing form by controlling at least one of voltage and time. There is no teaching or suggestion of this by Doyle.

The Raschke, et al. reference utilizes powder in which the dry toner particles are transferred from a container 24 to the belt or web and then transferred from the belt or web by a pressure roller 36 to the printing form. Raschke, et al. thus utilize a completely different type of procedure than the presently claimed invention. In Raschke, et al. a two-step procedure is undertaken for transporting the toner particles from the container to the printing form.

The patent to Calabrese, et al. does utilize a liquid toner, however, this liquid toner is used to produce a lithographic printing form which is not completely charged so that the liquid toner particles can be applied over the entire surface of the printing form but instead the particles are applied to the printing form pursuant to an image defined by a predetermined charge pattern that is selectively applied to the printing form. Thus, although Calabrese, et al. teach using liquid toner particles they do not teach applying the toner particles to the entire surface of the printing form as in the presently claimed invention.

The Examiner combined these references in determining that the claims would be unpatentable over such a combination. Applicants respectfully submit that although there are similarities between the teachings of the references and the presently claimed invention, the references do not teach the presently claimed invention. In particular, the main reference Doyle does not teach applying a liquid toner to the entire surface of the electrically charged printing form and controlling the voltage and time of the charging to control the thickness of the layer of liquid toner particles applied to the entire surface of the printing form and fixing the liquid toner particles and removing the fixed liquid toner particles. Simply because Doyle in passing refers to liquid toner particles does not mean that the reference teaches or suggests the specific steps mentioned above. To read these steps into Doyle is clearly hindsight reconstruction of the presently claimed invention. Furthermore, neither Raschke, et al. nor Calabrese, et al. provide any teachings which would suggest modifying Doyle to arrive at the presently claimed invention. Applicants submit that without the present application as a guide there is nothing in the teachings of any of these references which would motivate one skilled in the art to combine the teachings of these references to arrive at the presently claimed invention.

In view of these considerations it is respectfully submitted that the rejections of the claims presented in the parent application are overcome and should be withdrawn.

Reconsideration and allowance of the present application are respectfully requested.

Any additional fees or charges required at this time in connection with the application may be charged to our Patent and Trademark Office Deposit Account No. 03-2412.

Respectfully submitted,
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IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Amended) A method of imaging and erasing an erasable printing form, comprising the steps of:

electrically charging the printing form over its entire surface;

applying liquid toner particles, which have one of individual charges opposite the charges of the printing form, and dipole and multi-dipole moments [directed] aligned opposite the charges of the printing form, to the printing form so that the toner particles are attracted to the entire surface of the printing form to form a layer;

controlling the thickness of the layer of liquid toner particles [for] by controlling at least one of voltage and time during the charging step;

fixing the liquid toner particles with a source of energy in accordance with a picture to be printed, one of removing and breaking down non-fixed liquid toner particles to change ink acceptance behavior of the layer; and erasing the printing form as a whole, after an end of a printing process, by removing the fixed liquid toner particles.